

a concave centering mechanism having a concave surface and coupled to said rotational receptacle such that said plunger is in contact with said concave surface;

wherein a pivoting force applied to the handle stalk causes said plunger to be displaced along said concave surface, thereby compressing said plunger away from said distal end; and

wherein removal of said pivoting force allows distal linear movement of said plunger in response to said plunger bias, thereby forcing said plunger to a center of said concave surface.

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 are pending in the application. Claims 1-25 have been rejected by the Examiner and claims 26-34 have been objected to. Claim 35 has been allowed. Claims 26 and 28 have been amended herein. Applicants respectfully traverse each ground of rejection and request reconsideration and further examination of the application under 37 CFR § 1.111. Applicants respond to each ground of rejection and objection as follows.

A. Allowable subject matter.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowable subject matter of claims 26-35.

B. The disclosure was objected to because of noted informalities.

It is respectfully submitted that pages 20 and 22 of the specification have been amended in order to cure the informalities noted by the Examiner. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the specification is no longer objectionable.

- C. Claims 1-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-24 of prior U.S. Patent No. 6,020,563.**

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-24 have been cancelled herein, therefore their rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is now considered moot.

- D. Claims 1-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Risk, Jr. et al. (U.S. 6,020,563).**

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-24 have been cancelled herein, therefore their rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is now considered moot.

- E. Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dzung et al. (U.S. 5,153,391).**

It is respectfully submitted that claim 25 has been cancelled herein, therefore its rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is now considered moot.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests such action. Should it facilitate allowance of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Attached hereto are three pages which present a marked up version of the changes made to this application by the current amendment. This attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Applicants previously filed a two-month Request for Extension of time on May 29, 2002 and included a check for \$400.00 therewith to cover the statutory fees. Therefore, Applicants enclose a check in the remaining amount of \$520.00 for the third month of extension for this response. No additional fees are believed to be necessary,

however, should any fees be deemed required, please charge such fees to Deposit
Account No. 23-3030, but not to include any payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the specification:

The paragraph beginning at page 19, line 14 has been amended as follows:

In certain of these alternative embodiments the spring 34A is omitted, the series of female detents 22A is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis 24A of the stalk switch 140 and is radially symmetric about it, and a second spring 340 and a first detent washer 210 are placed inside the first rotary switch module 12A, with the second spring 340 positioned between the first rotary switch module 12A and the first detent washer 210 such that the first detent washer 210 is biased away from the rotary switch module 12A. The first detent washer 210 preferably has a first non-circular outer perimeter 211 shaped to mate with the first rotary switch module 12A, including the male detent 20A, thereby fixing the angular positions of the first detent washer 210 and the first rotary switch module 12A with respect to each other. The first detent washer 210 has a series of small male detents 212 on its distal surface shaped to mate with the series of female detents 22A. When the stalk switch 140 is assembled, the second spring 340 biases the first detent washer 210 and the rotary switch support member 14A together, with the series of small male detents 212 and the series of female detents 22A interfacing, so as to create a counter-torque against any torque applied to the first rotary switch module 12A. The magnitude of the counter-torque is limited by the strength of the second spring 340, and by the shape of the series of small male detents 212 and the series of female detents 22A, so that when sufficient torque is applied to the first rotary switch module 12A, the second spring [34A] 340 will compress in order to allow the detents 212 and 22A to slip relative to one another, permitting the first rotary switch module 12A to rotate. When the torque

applied is sufficiently reduced, the first rotary switch module 12A will come to rest at one of a finite number of angular positions relative to the rotary switch support member 14A, defined by the series of female detents 22A and the series of small male detents 212.

The paragraph beginning at page 22, line 13 has been amended as follows:

Figure 16 illustrates certain features of certain alternative embodiments of a stalk switch 140 according to the present invention. In certain alternative embodiments, the pair of magnets 74 and 76 are replaced with a proximal third magnet 774 and a distal third magnet 776, respectively, contained in a pair of plastic plungers 740, having enlarged heads 741, which are positioned in a pair of holes 745 in the rotation assembly 68A, preferably away from its axis of rotation, with their heads 741 contacting the elongated handle stalk 52A. A fourth spring 748 is preferably placed around the body of each of the plungers [741] 740 and between the heads 741 and the rotation assembly 68A, so that the heads 741 are biased away from the rotation assembly 68A. Rotation assembly 68A also contains a fourth magnet 760, preferably positioned far from its axis of rotation and about half-way between the pair of magnets 774 and 776 along the perimeter of the rotation assembly 68A.

In the claims:

Claims 26 and 28 have been amended as follows:

26. (Amended) [The] A multi-function stalk switch [of claim 25, further] comprising:

a first rotary switch module having a first surface;

a rotary switch support member having a second surface;
at least one first detent formed on one of said first and second surfaces;
a first detent washer shaped to engage said at least one first detent, and having an
angular position fixed relative to one of the first rotary switch module and the rotary
switch support member;
a first spring positioned to bias said first detent washer against said at least one
first detent;
a second rotary switch module having a third surface;
wherein the rotary switch support member also has a fourth surface;
at least one second detent formed on one of said third and fourth surfaces;
a second detent washer shaped to engage said at least one second detent, and
having an angular position fixed relative to one of the second rotary switch module and
the rotary switch support member;
a second spring positioned to bias said second detent washer against said at least
one second detent.

28. The multi-function stalk switch of claim [27] 26, further comprising:
a handle stalk having a proximal end and a distal end, said proximal end being
operatively coupled to said rotary switch support member;
a plunger coupled to said stalk distal end such that said plunger may move
linearly with respect to said stalk distal end, said plunger being biased in said distal
direction;

a rotational receptacle coupled to said handle stalk such that said handle stalk may pivot in at least one plane; and

a concave centering mechanism having a concave surface and coupled to said rotational receptacle such that said plunger is in contact with said concave surface;

wherein a pivoting force applied to the handle stalk causes said plunger to be displaced along said concave surface, thereby compressing said plunger away from said distal end; and

wherein removal of said pivoting force allows distal linear movement of said plunger in response to said plunger bias, thereby forcing said plunger to a center of said concave surface.